

Similar beliefs as to the annual return of the dead survive to this day in many parts of Europe and find expression in similar customs. The day of the dead or of All Souls, and as we call it, is commonly the second of November. Thus in Lower Brittany the souls of the departed come to visit the living on the eve of that day. After vespers are over, the priests and choir walk in procession, " the procession of the charnel-house/" chanting a weird dirge In the Breton tongue. Then the people go home, gather round the fire, and talk of the departed. The housewife covers the kitchen table with a white cloth, sets out cider, curds, and hot pan-cakes on it, and retires with the family to rest. The fire on the hearth is kept up by a huge log known as " the log of the dead" (*kef ann Anaon*). Soon doleful voices outside in the darkness break the stillness of night. It is the " singers of death " who go about the streets waking the sleepers by a wild and melancholy song, in which they remind the living in their comfortable beds to pray for the poor souls in pain. All that night the dead warm themselves at the hearth and feast on the viands prepared for them. Sometimes the awe-struck listeners hear the stools creaking in the kitchen, or the dead leaves outside rustling under the ghostly footsteps.¹ In the Vosges Mountains on All Souls' Eve the solemn sound of the church bells invites good Christians to pray for the repose of the dead. While the bells are ringing, it is customary in some families to uncover the beds and open the windows, doubtless in order to let the poor souls enter and rest. No one that evening would dare

to remain deaf to the appeal of the bells. The prayers
 are
 prolonged to a late hour of the night. When the last
De
profundis has been uttered, the head of the family
 gently
 covers up the beds, sprinkles them with holy
 water, and
 shuts the windows. In some villages fire is kept up
 on the
 hearth and a basket of nuts is placed beside it for
 the use
 of the ghosts.² Again, in some parts of Saintonge
 and
 Aunis a Candlemas candle used to be lit before the
 domestic

¹ A. le Braz, *La Légende de la Mortenais*, 1883-1887, ii/ 283 sqq.
Basse-Bretagne (Paris, 1893), pp. 280-² L. F. Sauve, *Le folk-
 lore des*
 287. Compare J. Lecoq, *Esquisses Hautes-Vosges* (Paris, 1889),
 pp. 295
du Bocage Normand (Conde-sur-Noir- sg.